

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Stripp Opposes Anti-business Bill



Measure Will Invite Retaliation, Hurt Economy, Cost Jobs

State Representative John E. Stripp Thursday opposed a measure that had widespread support from powerful labor unions that would make it more difficult for companies to bid for contracts with the state, send a protectionist message to other states around the country and encourage them to retaliate against Connecticut by enacting similar legislation.

The legislation (House Bill 5279) passed the state House of Representatives on a 97 - 45 vote.

“We fought the good fight, but once again the big labor special interests who call the shots with the General Assembly’s majority Democrats had their way,” said Representative Stripp, R-135th District. “It was a victory for the unions that will worsen Connecticut’s reputation as a state that is hostile to business. If it becomes law, this legislation will further dampen the business climate, make it harder to create new jobs, and ultimately hurt the employees it was intended to help.”

Under the legislation, the state would have to give preference in the award of contracts to companies that provide supplies, materials and equipment produced, assembled or manufactured in Connecticut or in the United States, and to firms that provide services originating and provided in the state or United States.

The bill also requires the governor to examine all service or procurement contracts in effect on July 1, 2006 to see if services provided or goods being manufactured under any contracts originate from outside Connecticut or outside the country. Foreign nationals doing the work on U. S. soil would still be considered a U. S. product under the bill, Representative Stripp noted.

“How can you determine with complete accuracy where the various components of a product come from? Making that determination will be a bureaucrat’s and an accountant’s dream come true and the additional costs of administering this new mandate will be extracted from Connecticut’s overburdened taxpayers. Does this legislation help the people of Connecticut? I don’t see how it can,” said Representative Stripp, who spoke against the bill on the floor of the House.

“This bill would, in effect, build a wall around Connecticut,” Representative Stripp said. “If this bill becomes law, we’d better start praying that other states don’t copy it. If they put legislation on their books that prohibits them from buying goods manufactured in

Connecticut, we will become isolated and have a very difficult time selling Connecticut-made products elsewhere in the country,” Representative Stripp said.

“Many say that the protectionist Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 was a major factor in intensifying and prolonging the Great Depression of the 1930’s,” Representative Stripp added.

“By toeing the union line today, the majority Democrats in the House took us several steps backwards. They told the people of Connecticut to forget about building a better product and being competitive. Instead, they advised us to be satisfied with what we have and try to hang onto it. In today’s global marketplace, that is a recipe for economic surrender,” Representative Stripp said.